



View from the

Blackdown Hills

Est 2004

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Issue No 98 February 2013



The only way to travel?

■ As the Blackdown Hills was blanketed with snow Matt Evans found the best way to travel was with his sled and huskies near Dunkeswell air strip
Photo by LOUISE EVANS

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Dual the A303!

Parish council joins calls for dual carriageway

A PARISH council has joined calls
for the dualling of the A303.

The concerns of Upton Parish
Council are two-fold - an apparent
increase in serious accidents and
the negative effect on the village
when traffic is diverted through it
after accidents.

Parish councillors met on Mon-
day, January 14th and decided - as
an opening measure - to write to
MP Neil Parish and Devon and
Cornwall police and crime com-
missioner Tony Hogg.

The issue has also been put on
the agenda for the February meet-

by Anders Larsson

ing of the council, by which time
it is hoped relevant statistics will
be available.

Upton Parish Council chair-
man John Cornish said that diver-
sions through the village
sometimes cause a problem, and
added: "They are narrow roads and
not good for lorries."

"I can think of three serious acci-
dents in the last few months."

"People see the helicopter and
the ambulances, and the traffic
goes through [the village]."

"To avoid serious accidents I
think the solution is to improve or
turn it [the A303] into a dual car-
riageway."

"As it seems to be an increasing
number of accidents, we thought
we'd remind our MP Neil Parish
and see if he can do anything about
it."

Mr Cornish added that council
members had raised the issue in
the past and would try to obtain ac-
cident statistics before their next
meeting to get a precise view of
the situation.

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News from the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



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Double success for local farmer

THE 31st Exeter and District Christmas Show was an unprecedented success for Linda Pidsley of Payhembury, near Honiton.

Linda took home 10 trophies and an array of titles including the championship with Joules, her 21-month-old British Blue heifer.

After taking the title at the show held at Exeter Livestock Centre the champion heifer was sold for £3,100 (500 pence per kilo) to the judge, Stuart Clatworthy, from Somerset.

The Pidsley family also took the reserve champion award, which went to their 18-month-old Blue heifer Fancy

Pants, and was sold to Gerald David of Porlock, reaching 290ppk.

In the sheep pens, it was a successful day for Robert Darke and Judith Laphorne, of Kingsbridge, who took the championship with a pair of Texel lambs, making £122 (281ppk), also sold to Gerald David.

Exeter City Council own Exeter Livestock Centre, where the show took place, and the Lord Mayor of Exeter, Cllr Rob Newby and the show president, Donald Burrough, presented the awards.

Chairman of the show is John Quick of Coldridge, secretary is Angela Heard and chief steward was Troy Stuart.

Kivells and Husseys, the market auctioneers, reported a fantastic day.

They said it was one of the best-ever quality line-ups of cattle.

Speaking afterwards, senior cattle auctioneer, Simon Alford, said: "We were delighted to see so many people at Exeter Livestock Centre and heartened by the encouragement from the city council.

"The show and sale was a terrific success with unrivalled quality livestock present for everyone to see."

Linda Pidsley said that she was "blown away" to win the championship and reserve championship.

She said: "After huge success at the Ex-

eter Show last year I have been told I made market history by being the first exhibitor in a 30-year history of the primestock show to ever win the champion and reserve champion titles.

"It is truly amazing and follows a hugely successful season with 'Joules', winning the championships at Honiton and Okehampton shows, first prize at Beef South West and third at the English Handlers.

"I must say a huge thanks to my mum and dad, Michael and Judith, my partner, Paul and other friends and family who have been a great support."



◆ TRIUMPH: Linda Pidsley and her championship winning British Blue heifer, Joules

Friendly help for silver surfers

THE SILVER Surfers drop in café takes place every Monday at the Blackdown Healthy Living Centre in Hemyock.

The drop in is aimed at anyone over 50 who may be having trouble getting to grips with their computer, phone or camera.

Those attending are welcome to bring their own gadgets or use one of the centre's laptops for informal help and advice about things you may be having trouble with or would like to learn more about.

There will also be some short (10 minute) talks on relevant issues such as password security, internet banking, spam emails etc.

The drop in can help with surfing the net safely, sending emails, video calling family and friends overseas for free, shopping online, moving photos from your digital camera to your computer and many other topics.

There is no need to book, just drop in on Mondays between 1.30 and 3.30pm. The price is £2 to include tea or coffee.

For more information contact the centre on 01823 680687.

NEWS briefs

Grass cutting contract

THE grass cutting contract for land owned by Culmstock Parish Council is due for renewal.

Anyone who would like to put a application in for the contract or would just like to see which land is included and what work is to be undertaken can view the details at www.culmstock.org/parish-council/parish-documents, click on Culmstock Schedule of works.

All quotes must be sent to the Parish Clerk by Friday February 15th. The contract will start on April 1st 2013 and will run for three years.

Pirates cast and crew

THE CORRYDALE Singers are intending the stage their own performance "The Pirates of Corrybean" in August and are looking for cast and crew and technical team members.

Anybody who would like to know more is asked to contact Shelagh Fearnley 0140488193, Kathy Laing 01404881601, Tony Drew 01404831365 or Brian Eddy 01404831009 or attend a meeting at Dalwood Village Hall on February 26th at 7.30pm.

Parish council calls for dualling of A303

FROM page 1

Devon County Council, Wiltshire Council, Plymouth City Council, Cornwall Council and Somerset County Council are currently working with The Highways Agency to develop what is known as The A303, A358, A30 Corridor Improvement Package.

No decisions have been made, but accidents are one reason why those involved are seeking improvements. One of the key facts established by the partnership so far, is: "There are a significant number of safety issues including lorries overturning at roundabouts, loss of control at certain sections and identified accident clusters."

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How we work and what we do

WE believe that communication is vital to clients and so we emphasis the importance to our team of regular updates to both clients and their advisers – whether by letter, phone or email. We enjoy working closely and building good relations with our clients' agents and advisers to ensure that transactions proceed with the minimum of disruption. Our team are told the importance of a personal service but this is backed up with the latest information technology. We find that clients value this individual service more and more as the larger commercial organisations and firms depart from the personal service ethos. Your solicitor here will have a firm grasp of your matter and will not be a faceless individual.

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We aim to provide our Clients with more than a strictly legal service. Because we have accumulated many years of local knowledge and work closely with other professionals and advisers, we can, when necessary, refer you to experts who can assist with issues affecting country home

owners and businesses. You may require advice on a wide range of services in such areas as listed building and planning, building and boundary plans, contaminated land and flooding issues, single farm payment entitlements, farm business tenancies and rent reviews through to the more practical issues such as thatching, swimming pools, private water and drainage issues and more besides.

The Rural Affairs team works closely with our Private Client department who can give expert advice on wealth and asset protection and any taxation issues which may arise as a result of your proposals. This may involve the use of effective estate planning, Wills and Trusts.

We believe that an early discussion with an experienced Solicitor can be of great benefit. If therefore you would like to find out more about how Beviss & Beckingsale can help you with the issues raised, or indeed anything else, then please contact :-
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Awards for eco-projects, farm innovators and long-serving farm workers in Devon

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THE Devon County Agricultural Association (DCAA) is once again seeking entries in the three award schemes that it runs each year, for community - eco-projects, farming innovators and long serving farm workers - all of which will be presented at the Devon County Show, between May 16th -18th.

The Prince of Wales Award is geared to local sustainability. Transition towns, local food co-operatives, renewable energy projects, communal composters, new allotments - if it's community-based, sustainable and in Devon, then it could qualify for the award, which comes with a cheque for £1,000.

Previous winners include a co-operatively-run village shop at Stokeinteignhead, an allotment association at Wembury and, last year, Sustainable South Brent. In every case, winning the award has marked a step change in the profile and development of the initiative.

Organiser, Ross Kennerley, commented: "Winning the Prince of Wales award was a tremendous boost for Sustainable South Brent - the certificate signed by Prince Charles, displayed in the centre of the village, attracted a lot of attention and interest in our activities. The cash prize has enabled us to improve the educational aspects of our community garden at the primary school, and we are making exciting progress in our plans for a village orchard."

"Meanwhile our compost scheme goes from strength to strength and we shall be investing

in some new equipment to help the growing band of volunteers who operate it each Sunday morning. I would strongly recommend any local sustainability project to apply for this award. It could turn out, as it did for us, one of the best things we've ever done."

The John Neason award has a stronger farming focus, being geared to individual farmers or groups of farmers who are breaking new ground in the way they produce or market the many different types of farm output. Past winners include Barney Butterfield, for his hugely successful Sandford Orchards cider and apple juice business, and the innovative agricultural contractor, James Lee, of Lee Farm Services.

"Finding new ways of boosting output, cutting costs and adding value will be the key to success in farming in future, and is at the heart of the DCAA's mission", said Richard Maunder.

"Farmers are naturally innovative, but they also tend to be rather backward in coming forward in claiming credit for what they do, which is why it hasn't always been easy to attract entries for this award. So I hope that this year, our innovative farmers will put modesty to one side and get their entries in, not only to serve as examples to their fellow farmers, but also to show the wider world what an exciting, progressive business farming has become. And there's a cheque for £750 on the end of it, with £250 for the runners-up!"

Devon farmers are asked to nominate their

farm staff for a Long Service Award. Any employee who has completed at least 30 years' service in agriculture, horticulture or forestry in the county with the same employer or on the same holding can qualify for an award, complete with certificate and glass tankard, and there are cash prizes of £80, £50 and £30 respectively for the three longest serving workers. Recipients of a certificate or trophy from a previous show are not eligible for another certificate or trophy, but may qualify for a cash award, provided they have not previously received one.

Richard Maunder said that the awards recognised the importance of a loyal and experienced workforce to the county's farming industry: "Long serving farm workers are the unsung heroes of farming in Devon, and I am delighted that we are able to celebrate their contribution each year in what is always one of the highlights of the Devon County Show."

"I hope and expect that every farmer in Devon who has an employee who qualifies for the awards will put their name forward."

The closing date for the awards is March 28th, 2013, which is also the date against which length of service will be judged for the purposes of the awards.

Application forms are available from Julie Wallace JulieWallace@dcshow.org or 01392 353710.

Call to help protect Stockland's wildlife gems

LOCAL people are being asked for their views about six small nature reserves around the village of Stockland.

The Stockland Turbaries are havens for wildlife owned by the parish council and managed by a dedicated team of volunteers.

The turbaries offer tranquil walks, intriguing heritage and stunning views, and now the parish council is keen encourage more people to enjoy these gems on the doorstep.

A new initiative is giving local people an opportunity to have a voice in how the sites are managed over the coming years, and perhaps get involved in caring for them.

In past centuries, the turbaries were used by local people to graze animals and cut fodder and fuel. This resulted in an open, lowland heaths lying on the spring lines, home to a rich diversity of wildlife. As these old practices died out, new management methods are



■ HORNER HILL - part of Stockland Turbaries

needed to maintain the heathland and prevent it from reverting to woodland. Lowland heaths are recognised as being one of Europe's most endan-

gered landscapes.

With support from the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team, the parish council is encouraging people to com-

plete a brief survey or try out some practical volunteering to help protect these precious habitats for the future.

The survey is available on both the Blackdown

Hills AONB and Stockland parish websites, or a paper copy can be obtained by calling Katherine Findlay at the Blackdown Hills AONB team on 01823 681933.

Road closure

THE road between Peacehay Lane to Nicholashayne Cross in Culmstock will be closed for drainage repairs from from Thursday, February 14th to Wednesday, February 27th.

The alternative, signed, route for vehicles will be via the road from Almshayne Cross to Nicholashayne Cross, heading northwest from Tythe Barn Cross - road from Henegar to Burlescombe Cross - road from White Ball Gate to Redhill Farm Cross - Peacehay Lane to Nicholashayne Cross and vice versa.



Pub closure

A VILLAGE pub is closed at the end of January. The White Hart in Wilmington only reopened just over a year ago, but landlady Sam Baker said the pub would close at the end of the month.

When asked why the decision to close was made, she said: "Predominantly because it is cheaper to drink at home."

She added that some villagers had been very supportive, but she also estimated that 90 per cent of villagers don't go to the pub.

Dairy award for farmers



■ MEMBURY farmers Trevor and Carol Johnson, pictured above, triumphed at the Mole Valley Farmers Forage for Profit Awards 2013. Mr and Mrs Johnson of Twist Farm, Membury, clinched the Dairy Award (Sponsored by British Seed Houses).

Beekeeping beginners welcome on new course

EAST Devon Beekeepers (EDB) are recruiting for a beginners' course.

East Devon Beekeepers is a branch of Devon Beekeepers' Association and has an apiary on a farm between Axminster and Kilminster.

Apart from East Devon, the branch also draws members from neighbouring parts of Somerset and Dorset. The current membership stands at about 150, but it is hoped this will swell after a course for beginners.

The initial part of 2013 beginners' course will be held in the cricket pavilion in Kilminster, to be followed by summer sessions at the branch apiary.

EDB member Rowland Molony outlined the curriculum by saying: "The beginners' course starts at the end of January and meets regularly through to April, when meetings move across to the branch apiary where participants get to handle

bees, identify the internal working parts of a hive, and understand the natural organisation of a colony.

"This means identifying queen, workers, drones, learning about their individual life-cycles, and the division of labour between the bees.

"The hive is composed of many components, so students become familiar with this type of hardware.

"They also see the value of suitable clothing, and necessary personal equipment.

"Managing bees throughout the year is a vital part of the course: that is through spring expansion, dealing with swarms, harvesting honey and preparing bees for winter.

"Students also learn about stings, using smoke, keeping records, liaising with the public, selling honey, and many many more areas that get opened up by studying flowers, pollen, nectar, and the biology of the bee."

Trudi Morgan is one of those who

took up beekeeping after attending the annual course. She said: "It is the third summer coming up, so I'm a novice.

"I always wanted to keep bees and a friend told me there was one place left on the course." Her fellow beekeeper Emma Norris has been involved a little longer. She took up the hobby eight years ago and told the View: "I inherited my grandfather's old beehives.

"He kept bees in the 1930s and during the war.

"I hadn't known him as a beekeeper but I had heard the stories.

"Another beekeeper persuaded me to have a go, and it was infectious."

For further information about EDP and the course, contact Richard Simpson on 01297 551070. Information is also available online at www.eastdevon-bees.org.uk

MP also supporting beekeepers

LOCAL MP Neil Parish joined a giant bumble bee and campaigners from the environment charity Friends of the Earth in January to draw attention to the alarming decline in UK bee numbers.

Mr Parish, who is also a member of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, was one of more than 125 MPs to show their support for Britain's threatened bees in the Friends of the Earth Bee Cause campaign.

A sharp fall in their number in recent years has led to growing concerns about the impact this may have on our local environment, farmers and the economy.

A study last year found that if bees disappeared it would cost British farmers at least £1.8 billion a year to pollinate their crops by hand - which would cause food prices, such as fresh fruit and veg, to rocket.



■ MP Neil Parish backing the Bee Cause campaign

Mr Parish said: "I am extremely concerned about the rapid decline in British bees. They're not only an iconic part of our

countryside; they play a vital role in pollinating our crops and flowers too. It's great news that Friends of the Earth is

creating a buzz about these crucially important insects - I'll be doing all I can to help protect our bees in 2013."

Uncovering the Iron Age past of the Blackdown Hills

WOULD you like to learn modern archaeology skills? Could you spare a few hours to take part in an exciting Iron Age project? Or have you found glassy black rock in your garden or fields?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, local archaeologist Marc Cox wants to hear from you.

A new project funded by the Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership's Sustainable Development Fund and Devon County Council is underway to further understand the area as a centre for ancient iron manufacture.

Marc Cox, a post-graduate researcher at the University of Exeter and local resident, and Dr Brian Gilmour, a senior researcher at Oxford University, have begun work to uncover the age and extent of this

important industry that shaped the landscape of the Blackdown Hills.

The project aims to undertake a large-scale geophysical survey of important sites this month. It will bring together knowledge of local residents and landowners to better complete the archaeological picture.

Marc and Brian would like to hear from anyone who would like to take part in the fieldwork, or who has information about the presence of slag (a black lava-like rock) or ironstone from anywhere within the AONB.

Please get in touch with Marc by emailing mantony-cox@gmail.com or via the AONB office on 01823 680681.

Frankenstein in Stockland

FRANKENSTEIN will be appearing at Stockland Village Hall courtesy of the Miracle Theatre Company.

Told with the visual flair of early cinema and the elegant charm of the post-war British musical, this silly, but tender, story of unrequited love, confused monsters and science gone mad, promises to hit the spot. It includes foot-tapping songs, dazzling dance, eye watering comedy and a jolly good fright!

The show, which takes place on on Saturday, February 9th at 7.30pm is suitable for ages 7 upwards. Please book early to avoid disappointment, call Wendy 01404 881 207, family ticket £30, child £8, adult £10. There will be a licensed bar.



Who gets the wooden spoon?

WILDSIDE Experience will be holding a spoon carving day on Saturday, February 9th.

You can create a bespoke hand-carved spoon from living willow in just one day! All tuition and tools are provided, as well as refreshments and a home-cooked lunch.

Spoons can be personalised by burning into the wood with a pyrography pen.

The course takes place from 10am-3pm, adults £25, children age 11-16 (must be accompanied by an adult) £15. Booking is essential, and wellies are needed for harvesting the wood!



Wildside Experience is based at Madford near Hemmock.

See www.wildsideexperience.co.uk or ring 01823 680931.

Stockland fair is back!

AFTER missing a year for a well earned rest, and to avoid giving unfair competition to the London Olympics, Stockland Fair returns in 2013 on the Late Spring Bank Holiday Monday, May 27th

The fair was granted by King Henry III to the Manor of Stockland in 1252. It will start at 1.30pm at the Victory Hall and include the original and famous Eggathon.

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WORKING OUR WOODLANDS

Blackdown and East Devon Woodland Association
with John Greenshields

THERE is a new project in the Blackdown Hills and East Devon AONB's, spearheaded by the Woodland Association called "Culmwoods".

It's a community woodland working group, which will enable folks to do valuable work in woodlands in exchange for fire wood. This serves three purposes - free fuel, exercise, and managing woodlands that would not have been managed.

There is a small joining fee, and various levels of membership, from just picking up brush to felling trees, there is also reduced price chain saw certificate training. There are woodlands owned by various trusts and individuals that at present are under managed, there will be training, skilled guidance and insurance for the members. Details are on our web site. If you are interested please contact me and I can explain more.

I hope you all had a great Christmas, we had a house full of grandchildren, and as usual ate to much, although not turkey but some of our own pork and pheasant. It was while sitting down after lunch that I was wondering how we were going to get our woodfuel out of the woods this year. We burn about 50 ton of logs a year, and only extract in the winter. Already we have cancelled our thinning operations because of the weather, it has effected all forestry operations and is very serious. If the rain and snow continues the forestry sector will be a year behind, and that includes planting as well, with woodland creation schemes put on hold.

Two much water is not good for large trees as it alters their structure and of course makes them more vulnerable to wind blow, the roots can rot if continually in sodden conditions. It's no walk in the park for woodland wildlife either, especially birds, raptors need their feathers in tip top condition if they are to catch their prey, and not wet, and save a thought for animals that live underground with some losing their homes altogether.

The recent snow has also damaged trees by snapping off limbs and bringing down older trees, this all nature's way of culling the weak and vulnerable. Primroses, daffodils and snowdrops are all pushing their way through the snow so spring is not far away.

Let's hope that 2013 will bring better weather, and there is the Woodland Fair to look forward too, along with other events listed on the website. Can I take this opportunity to thank all who have helped me in my pursuit of all things "woody" and wish you all a happy and prosperous 2013

My usual contacts are 01823660764 parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk

Council staff go gold



■ STAFF and managers at East Devon District Council join with leader Paul Diviani to celebrate achieving Investors in People Gold

EDDC has won a top Investors in People award following a recent review, one of only two district councils in the South West to achieve the Gold standard.

The accolade is official recognition that EDDC is among the best employers in the region.

Assessor Julie Luscombe summed up her report on the latest assessment saying: "Having carried out the review process in accordance with the guidelines provided by Investors in People - UK Commission for Employment and Skills, I am totally satisfied that East Devon District Council meets the requirements of the Investors in People National Standard.

"I am pleased also to state that you meet a total of 165 evidence requirements and that you have achieved Gold level".

Investors in People Gold is awarded to just 3.2 per cent of organisations in the UK and is held by just one other council in the South West.

It is presented to employers who go above and beyond in the way they develop, support and motivate their team.

Commenting on the award, EDDC leader Paul Diviani said: "My warmest congratulations go to the HR team for their hard work in setting out the framework for compliance with this exacting assessment and to all the unsung heroes among our employees who play a part in helping us to run the council efficiently and to face the many challenges we meet".

Karen Jenkins, Corporate Organisational Development Manager, said: "I'm delighted we have been accredited with Gold status."

WHERE TO COLLECT YOUR VIEW

THE VIEW FROM THE BLACKDOWN HILLS

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For more information, please contact Val Baker on 01823 681484 or email info@bhba.org.uk www.bhba.org.uk

LAST REMINDER Businesses are invited to advertise in the 2013 edition of the Blackdown Hills Directory

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E: info@bhba.org.uk or T: 01823 681484 www.bhba.org.uk.

Sheep worrying

A NUMBER of incidents of lambs being injured and killed by dogs being allowed to roam free on farmland have been reported to Upottery Parish Council.

It is the dog owners responsibility to keep their dog under control at all times and not to allow it to worry or chase livestock.

Big breakfast

SUPPORTERS of Cancer Research UK in Clayhidon will be holding a Big Breakfast on Saturday, March 9th at the village hall from 9am to 1pm.

Anyone who wants to book a place and time ahead can do so at 01823 680481.

Charity ball

CLAYHIDON charity ball will take place on May 27th Save the date and watch this space for more details Organisers hope to raise funds for the Devon Air Ambulance, Cancer Research and the Children's Hospice South West.

Tickets will be on sale soon for the ball in Strawberry Field, courtesy of the Blackmore family.

History talk

DR DAVID Pugsley will be giving a talk at the Church Rooms, Hemyock on February 14th at 7.30pm on the famous Moretonhampstead murder in 1835, which he has researched with access to all the relevant papers.

Dr Pugsley, a historical legal expert will discuss all the papers relating to the murder including a speech by the Home Secretary at the time who stated that "the criminal classes did not require as much evidence to convict as normal citizens." Everyone is welcome for a sociable evening and stimulating discussion.

Book discussion

THE NEXT meeting of Stockland Book Group takes place on Tuesday, February 5th at the Kings Arms in Stockland. The book up for discussion is Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel. Copies are available from Honiton Library or contact Wendy 01404 881207 OR Jane 01404 831207.

Scottish reeling

FREE Scottish dancing sessions take place in the skittle alley of The King's Arms, Stockland, every Tuesday evening from 7 pm to 8 pm. The only thing organisers ask is that dancers drink a wee dram or two to support the pub

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The Voice contestant goes back to school

● UFFCULME School welcomed back a former pupil to officially open their new recording studio in January.

Adam Isaac, who was a contestant on the BBC The Voice programme performed a short gig and held a masterclass for students before opening the studio.

View from the Blackdown Hills is pleased to include news and photos from schools and clubs in the area. Please send your news stories to blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

2013 - a space odyssey!

PUPILS at Upottery Primary School near Honiton were recently taken on an exciting voyage to the stars inside the Space Odyssey mobile planetarium.

Kingfisher class teacher Trudi Bartlett invited local resident Simon Ould, from Hemyock, to take his Voyager inflatable dome into the school hall to link in with the children's recent learning about space.

Over the course of the day, children from Wren, Kingfisher, Kestrel and Falcon classes (from Reception to Year 6) all had a chance to enter the dome to learn about the Earth, Moon, stars and planets.

Using spectacular 360-degree digital projection technology, the children were able to simulate landing on the Moon, exploring the icy rings of Saturn and even to imagine being on a rocket blasting off into space. They were shown where to spot planet Jupiter in the skies this winter, along with the Pleiades star cluster (better known as the Seven Sisters) and famous star patterns like Orion and the Plough.

After emerging from the dome, Year 4 pupil Leo (aged 9) said: "I enjoyed seeing the massive international space station - I didn't realise it was so huge".

Kingfisher class pupil Isabelle (aged 7) said: "I



■ PUPILS of Upottery Primary School outside Space Odyssey's Voyager dome in the school hall and (right) with detailed images of the surface of the moon projected behind them

liked it because it was 3D. When the meteorite came, it looked like it was going to hit you.

"I loved it when Simon zoomed in and you could see Jupiter and the Seven Sisters close up," added her classmate Archie, also aged 7. Their teacher, Mrs Bartlett, said afterwards: "It was a fantastic experience - better than a school trip!"

Mr Ould later said: "It was great to be invited back to Upottery so that

more of the children could come into the dome. Last time I came, I used my smaller dome in the nearby Manor Rooms but this time I was able to use my much larger dome in the school's fabulous new hall in their recent extension.

"Hopefully, today's hi-tech dome experiences will leave a lasting impression on the children and perhaps even inspire a few of them to train as astronomers or even astronauts themselves."



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Inspirational concert from chamber choir

SOMERSET Chamber Choir stages a concert of inspirational British music at King's College Chapel, Taunton, on Sunday February 17th at 3pm.

Celebrating the centenary of Benjamin Britten's birth, the concert showcases an engaging selection of works by Britten alongside music by Elgar, Grainger, Parry, Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Walton.

Titled "Great Britain - Great Britten!", the concert will include many works by Benjamin Britten in this his centenary year.

Many of these may be new discoveries for some, including A.M.D.G. (a collection of seven delightful short choral works published after his death), and these will be performed along with music by other well-known British composers, such as Parry's My Soul There is a Country in this exploration of Great British music.

The concert has attracted the attention of the Britten-Pears Foundation which has generously awarded a grant toward the staging, for which Somerset Chamber Choir would like to

express their gratitude.

The concert will also feature outstanding young tenor Greg Tassell (who will sing some folksong arrangements by Britten - including The Trees They Grow So High which was collected locally in Curry Rivel in the early 1900s), Richard Pearce on organ and piano, and will be conducted by Graham Caldbeck. Tickets for the concert are available from Taunton TIC telephone 01823 336344, or find out more and book online at www.somersetchamberchoir.org.uk

● **SPANISH** Blues Guitar with Claude Bourbon will be on offer at St Michael's Church, Awliscombe, on Friday February 15th at 7.30pm

Born in France in the early 60s, Claude Bourbon grew up in Switzerland where he was classically trained. This finger picking guitarist has performed and studied all over the world, crafting an unbelievable fusion of classical and jazz, with ethereal Eastern influences, Spanish and Latin elements with strains of Western Folk. For more information call 01404 43480.



● **AS PART** of the Somerset Touring Arts Scheme Take Art Mad Dogs & Englishmen will present a fast paced and faithful adaptation of Charles Dickens' David Copperfield at Churchinford Village Hall on Friday, March 1st.

Dickens' favourite novel, is brought to stage with all its dark comedy. The talented cast of two captures the hilarity and pathos of Dickens' writing with finesse, depth and ingenious dexterity in this compulsive piece of theatre. For more information and tickets contact Angela Dawson 01823 601 422.

● **"FEMMES FATALES"** - the highly acclaimed jazz vocalist Sarah Moule and pianist Jenny Carr will present Songs for the Fallen, Wild and Wicked from on Friday March 15th at Clayhidon Parish Hall at 7.30pm.

This new show combines music with theatre and celebrates the Femme Fatale in all her feisty glory as heroine, heartbreaker, rule-breaker and role model from Cleopatra and Mata Hari to the Film Noir and the Suffragettes.

Although it contains nothing dangerously saucy, it is aimed at adult audiences who have variously described it as "compelling", "empowering" and "highly original". Tickets: Adults - £8; Concs - £6; Family (2+2) £24. Contact Bee Hill 01823 680 347 or email: beehill@hotmail.co.uk



Making merry with Cinderella in Membury

IN the village of Membury they know how to let their hair down - especially when it comes to the pantomime season.

And let their hair down they certainly did with the staging of the village's 12th panto, Cinderella, presented by the Membury Merry-makers.

In the cosy confines of the village hall and with one of the smallest stage areas imaginable, the Merry-makers produced a show that had the packed out audiences rolling in the aisles.

But this was more than just a group of keen amateur stage performers presenting their annual outing in the spotlight. This was a real village event and on the night I attended the audience worked just as hard as the cast to make the evening such an enjoyable experience, taking audience participation to new limits.

They positively revelled in the corny jokes, ads libs and occasional slip-ups, adding greatly to the humour of the occasion, proving beyond doubt that making merry in Membury is pretty much an art form in its own right.

With such a confined stage area, improvisation is essential and director and set designer Barry Marshall and his team deserve great credit for creating no less than 15 scene changes by clever use of the flaps.

Top marks also to musical director Billy Matthews, one of the most talented young performers in the area, for his choice of musical numbers which greatly enhanced

by Philip Evans

the enjoyment factor and which included some classics such as "When I Fall In Love", "I'm In The Mood For Dancing" and "If You're Ever In A Jam".

There were some splendid performances from the leading players, especially Lynette Burrough (Cinderella) and Kirsten McIlroy (Prince Harry), a highlight of the show being their "When I Fall In Love" duet.

And in Ron Martin and Jeremy Wallave they had two of the ugliest sister s I have come across in over 40 years of covering local pantomimes. They hammed it up to the extreme, made the most of the ad-libs and put the fear to every male member of the audience just in case they caught their eye. Brilliant home-grown panto!

There were other excellent performances from the leading players, the most notable being Chantelle Soutar (Baroness Hardup), Judy Martin (Buttons), Nat Bruzon (The King), Pauline Marshall (Dab), Robbi Robson (Dino), Sam Dare (Fairy Godmother) and Katy Henderson (Nuffield the fairy).

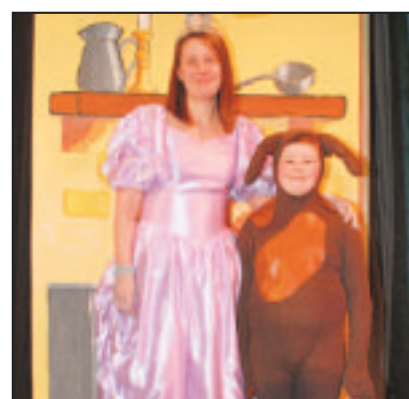
Full cast list

Lynette Burrough (Cinderella), Chantelle Soutar (Baroness Hardup), John Tuck (Baron Hardup), Ron Martin (Grizzelda), Jeremy Wallace (Drossilla), Judy Martin (Buttons), Henry Dare (Bonzo), Nat Bruzon (The King), Angela Stride (The Queen), Kirsten McIlroy (Prince Harry), Pauline

Marshall (Dan), Robbi Robson (Dino), Kaci Payne, Scott Henderson (Tyler Payne (guards), Lauren Shepherd (Hocus), Flora McIlroy (Pocus), Sam Dare (Fairy Godmother), Katy Henderson (Nuffield), Nigel Cook (town crier doorman, vicar and Mr Grabbit), Imogen Payne (Henrietta), Elly Jemison (Dinah), Emmi Cook (Dolly), Tyler Payne (John), Kaci Payne (Polly Sryrene), Beryl Griffin (Carol Singers and Dolly's mum), Tyler, Imogen, and Kaci Payne and Scott Henderson (Sprites mice and bugs).

Back stage

Barry Marshall (writer, director, stage director and set construction), Nat Bruzon (assistant director and additional script and songs), Billy Matthews (musical director), Robbi Robson (production co-ordinator), Stuart Payne (stage manager and props), George Pitman (assistant stage manager), Pauline Marshall and helpers (wardrobe), Molly Barrell (lighting), Richard Barrell (sound), Terry Worsley (posters, tickets and programmes), Terry and Sandy Worsley, Elly Jemison, Barry Marshall, Kirsten McIlroy, and Jakki Henderson (set painting), Brenda Dwn (prompt), Rosie Shepherd, Jakki Henderson, Marilyn Burrough, Amanda Cook and Stuart Payne (chaperones), Julie Payne Jane Iiddicot, Bill and Jean Foster and Jeanette Tuck (front of house), Julie Payne (raffle), Nill and Jean Foster (refreshments for matinee), The Meeting Place (bar), Membury Post Office (box office).



Tell us about your upcoming leisure events - email blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

Season ends even for men's and women's trophies



■ 3 Wood Mixed Singles winner Jose Williams and runner up Mick Stoakes, presented by John Hussey

DUNKESWELL Outdoor Bowls Club held their annual presentation lunch was held at Lakeside Manor in January.

It was a very social, well attended event with 16 cups being presented during the afternoon, to winners and runners up of the seven competitions played. Coincidentally eight awards went to the ladies and eight to the men.

Thanks were expressed to Mimi and Di Eames for organising the lunch and raffle, and to Andy Smith who organised the competitions, also to John Hussey for presenting the prizes.

The prize winners for the 2012 season were:

● Novices Cup, winner Bridget Hallowes runner up Pat Smith.

● Ladies 4 Wood. Winner Pearl Hackwood, Runner up Linda Vince.

● Gents 4 Wood. Winner Ian Wederell, Runner up Tom Smith.

● 4 Wood Mixed pairs. Winners Di Eames and Pearl Hackwood. Runners up Tom Williams & Jose Williams.

● 3 Wood Singles. Winner Jose

Williams, runner up Mick Stoakes.

● 2 Wood Singles. Winner Ian Wederell, runner up Mick Stoakes.

● 4 Wood Handicap. Winner Tom Smith, runner up Mick Stoakes.

New members are always welcome to join and the new season will commence in April 2013,



■ BRIDGET Hallowes winner of Novices Cup with John Hussey and Andy Smith



■ DI EAMES with 4 wood mixed pairs trophy, which she won with Pearl Hackwood

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■ COME AND JOIN US: Organisers of the Dalwood 3 Hills Challenge

The challenge of the hills

DALWOOD 3 Hills Challenge is scheduled for Sunday, February 24th.

The multi-terrain event is now in its 11th year and is described as a 'warm-up to the Grizzly'. The hilly, muddy and sometimes wet and exhausting challenge takes in the three hills around the picturesque village of Dalwood and is approximately 10 miles in distance.

There will also be a Mini Challenge of approximately three miles

(minimum age 12 years) and a one and a half mile fun run.

Entry forms can be downloaded at <http://axevalleyrunners.org.uk> or by contacting Derek Gould 07974257803.

Also taking place this year is an event within an event - ten members of the Tuckers Arms B skittles team are running a sponsored relay to raise money for The Baton.

The Baton is a local charity, founded by Alan Rowe of Honi-

ton which uses the money raised to help and increase awareness of wounded soldiers.

Sponsor forms can be obtained from any of the runners - Kevin Tratt, Tony Benger, Dennis Freeth, Richard Seward, Joy Pike, Tim Waring, Andrew Davey, Mark from Little Burrow, Peter Lawrence or Karen Drew.

For more information on this charity click on their website <http://www.thebaton.co.uk>

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- Visits to York and Harrogate
- A drive through the Yorkshire Dales
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Chelsea Flower Show & Kew Gardens

Visit the world's most famous flower show
Departs 24 May 2013

Here's your chance to visit Chelsea - the world's most famous flower show. Marvel at the floral exhibits and fabulous show gardens, get advice and inspiration, and see the latest in garden design and equipment. Including a visit to Kew Gardens, this is a break no garden lover will want to miss!

Price includes

- Return coach travel
- One nights' bed and continental breakfast accommodation in a good quality hotel in the Greater London/Heathrow area
- Entrance to the Chelsea Flower Show
- Entrance to Kew Gardens
- The services of a Tour Manager

2 days from
£149.00



Coronation Festival at Buckingham Palace

Celebrating 60th Anniversary of The Queen's Coronation
Departs 13 July 2013

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Price includes

- Coach travel throughout
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Departs 5 April 2013

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11th year on top for Mini at the BusinessCar Awards

MINI has once again reinforced its position as the car to beat after BusinessCar Magazine named the MINI Hatch 'Supermini of the Year' for the 11th consecutive year at their annual awards.

The BusinessCar Awards are the only honours in the company car and van industry that are solely voted for by the readership, which makes them the most influential in the business car arena. MINI continued to impress readers, with the it's unique combination of great design, low running costs, low CO2 emissions and exceptionally strong residual values contributing to its repeated success.

"MINI's combination of brand prestige and fun-to-drive character with efficiency and residual values that lead to unbeatable running costs mean it's no surprise that the car has now held onto BusinessCar's Supermini of the Year award for an 11th year," said BusinessCar Editor Paul Barker. "It's a huge achievement, and illustrates the massive appeal in the corporate sector for a car with the qualities that the business car market relies on."

Efficiency has never been more important for business customers, and MINI has continued to lead innovation some 11 years after

first winning BusinessCar's Supermini of the Year award. MINI's acclaimed MINIMALISM technologies are fitted as standard on Cooper, Cooper D, Cooper S, Cooper SD and John Cooper Works models, employing a host of fuel-saving and emission-lowering technologies. Brake Energy Regeneration, Auto Start-Stop, Gearshift Indicator and Electromechanical Power Steering are among the key MINIMALISM technologies, ensuring

CO2 emissions on the MINI Hatch start from just 99g/km on the MINI Cooper D.

The 11th BusinessCar accolade comes as MINI prepares to celebrate another milestone this year, with 100 years of continuous car production at the brand's historic Oxford production plant in March. The MINI Plant has been producing the award winning MINI since 2001, prior to which an array of vehicles were built in the preceding 88 years.



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